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RECEIVED
Becker
MIAMI-DADE COUNTY
PROCESS NO.: Z24-102
DATE: JUL 25 2024
BY: ISA

May 23, 2024

Via Electronic Portal Submission:

Lourdes M. Gomez, AICP
Director
Department Regulatory & Economic Resources
Miami-Dade County
111 NW 1st Street, 11th Floor
Miami, Florida 33128

- ***Re: Letter of intent and explanation of proposed use and zoning matter, pursuant to the instructions for submitting a request for Zoning Hearing for a Non-Use Variance at the parcel of land described 8605 SW 56th St, Miami, FL 33155, with a Miami-Dade County Folio of 30-4022-018-0030 (the “MV Property”).***

Dear Ms. Gomez:

Our Firm represents Moosilauke Visions, Inc. (the “Applicant”) owner of the MV Property in unincorporated Miami-Dade County (the “County”). This letter serves as the required letter of intent pursuant to a request for Zoning Hearing and is submitted on behalf of the Applicant.

The MV Property is located east of 87th Avenue, abutting the north side of S.W. 56th Street. The Miami-Dade County Property Appraiser’s Office identifies the Property as consisting of one lot with the following Folio number: 30-4022-018-0030. The legal description of the Property is 22 54 40 LAKE CATALINA PB 76-20 LOT 3 & PROP INT IN & TO LAKE LOT SIZE 120.000 X 162 OR 15677-3901 1092 1. The MV Property is an oddly shaped lot with approximately 19,400 square feet and contains one single family structure, consisting of approximately 4,369 square feet of actual area, 3,739 square feet of living area, and an adjusted area of 3,542 square feet. Abutting the lot on the east and west sides are similarly situated and sized lots, each containing one single family structure. abuts two duplex properties on the west. The rear of the MV Property abuts a lake, commonly known as Lake Catalina.

The Future Land Use Map (“FLUM”) of the County’s Comprehensive Development Master Plan provides that most of the MV Property is designated “Residential – Single Family: 1 Unit” and the Zoning designation for the MV Property is “2100 Estates – 15,000 SQFT Lot”. Both of the neighboring properties on either side of the Property contain the same FLUM and Zoning designations.

The proposed use for the MV Property seeks to establish a Group Home, which is a permitted use on the property as per Sec. 33-224(3) of the Miami Dade County Code (the “Code”).

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The request for Zoning Hearing in this application is limited to a non-use variance for Sec. 33-224(3)(c), which requires that the structure used for a group home be located at least one thousand (1,000) feet from another existing, unabandoned legally established group home. The 1,000-foot distance requirement is measured by following a straight line from the nearest portion of the structure of the proposed use to the nearest portion of the of the existing use.

Currently, and as reflected in the application materials, an unabandoned group home exists within the one thousand foot distance requirement set forth under the Code. The property located at 8721 SW 56 St, with a Miami-Dade County Folio of 30-4021-037-0160, is currently a licensed group home, operated by Vida Holistica ALF, Corp. (“Vida Holistica”). Vida Holistica’s property is approximately 336 feet from the MV Property. Vida Holistica’s property contains a single-family structure consisting of four bedrooms and two bathrooms. Vida Holistica’s Property is located west and across the main thoroughfare, 87th Avenue, and contains a different FLUM and Zoning designation from the MV Property.

According to the Agency for Health Care Administration (“AHCA”), Vida Holista has operated a group home at 8721 SW 56 St since at least January of 2008 and inspection records do not yield any reports of fraud or negligent incidents. The nature of Vida Holistica ALF, Corp’s group home operation is an assisted living facility (“ALF”) designed to provide personal care services in the least restrictive and most home-like environment. ALF facilities can range in size from one resident to several hundred and may offer a wide variety of personal and nursing services designed specifically to meet an individual's personal needs. The number of participants, or patients, at Vida Holistica is unknown, but is limited to no more than seven people. The participants of Vida Holistica’s group home operation are non-transient individuals who reside on the property and require the care of an on-site medically trained staff member.

The Applicant’s prospective group home operation, Mountain Valley (“MV”), seeks to bring a nationally recognized group home program, which treats and addresses the youth anxiety epidemic through specialized evidence-based treatment like Exposure and Response Prevention (ERP) therapy.¹ Mountain Valey currently operates a small, 90-day treatment program for high-functioning teens struggling with anxiety and related disorders in New Hampshire.² The group home they are seeking to establish at the MV Property will be a small residential program designed to help capable young adults overcome anxiety and related disorders while developing the skills, confidence, and resources needed for a successful launch or re-launch back into the community.

The Applicant’s intended use of the MV Property is to provide 90-day treatment and supervised residential housing for young adult participants. Participants will learn to engage and communicate effectively with peers and the community and will participate in clinical treatment and therapies both onsite and at off-site office space. The Applicant’s group home operation

¹ See: <https://people.com/health/inside-one-teen-girls-struggle-to-manage-anxiety-during-the-pandemic/> (See also: <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/10/11/magazine/why-are-more-american-teenagers-than-ever-suffering-from-severe-anxiety.html>)

² [Treatment for Adolescents & Emerging Adults | Mountain Valley Treatment Center](#)

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specifically disallows “externalizers” at risk of disruptive or destructive behaviors. The rule-out criteria for proposed applicants of their group home operation excludes: individuals with a history or exhibiting substance misuse; disruptive behavior disorders; history of aggression or violence; oppositional defiant disorder or conduct disorder; intermittent explosive disorder; severe mood disorders; eating disorders –(e.g. anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa); risk of psychosis or suicidality; bipolar disorder that is not currently well managed by medication; personality disorders; dissociative disorders; severe cognitive disabilities or learning impairments.

Three main points are offered in support of the Applicant’s non-use variance seeking an exception to Sec. 33-224(3)(c). First, the MV Property is located in a different neighborhood than the nearest group home, as indicated by the fact that MV Property’s zoning and FLUM designation are different from the Vida Holistica property. The policy and purpose of establishing a distance requirement for group home is to prevent a neighborhood from being saturated with group home operations. Here, the character, nature, rhythm and step of the MV Property is entirely different from the Vida Holistica property and its location across 87th Avenue creates a physical boundary between the properties near and around MV Property and those in the vicinity of Vida Holistica.

Second, neither the character and nature of Vida Holistica’s operation, nor that of the Applicant’s proposed group home, fit the conventional group home definition. Vida Holistica’s operation is a small, permanent living facility, designed for the long-term medical care of its participants. The Applicant’s proposed group home is an operation for high-functioning adults in Miami, consisting mainly of college students. The criteria of their proposed cohort of participants is designed to specifically rule out residents that would pose a threat, bring blight, or decrease in the quality of life for surrounding residents. Participation in the Applicant’s program model requires residents at the MV Property to an active, healthy, lifestyle with a commitment to established educational and employment goals as a condition. Because both programs serve residents who are contributing members of society, the spirit and policy of establishing a distance requirement to preserve the quality of life for the surrounding residents of each area is not jeopardized.

Third, the program, mission and objectives of the Applicant’s program seeks to fill a void in the access young adults have to programs addressing the anxiety epidemic in our community. The group home the Applicant proposes raises the quality of life of its residents, and promotes their ability to continue in leading an already successful life. The impact of the Applicant’s program is to create more leaders, and greater contributors to our society, by empowering its residents to overcome the dangers of crippling anxiety.

For the aforementioned reasons, we ask that you consider granting the non-use distance variance, which will allow the Applicant to satisfy all the requirements under Sec. 33-224(3) of the Miami Dade County Code, allowing them to establish a group home on the MV Property. On behalf of the Applicant, I encourage you to contact me if you have any questions or if there is any information I may provide you in addition to the information contained in this letter, the required

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application materials, and the supplementary information provided on my client's behalf regarding their program's credentials and model.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'DJM', is written over a horizontal line.

David J. Moscoso
Attorney at Law
For the Firm

DJM/ma